

A Glossary of Gender Terms



Language is dynamic, continually growing and changing. This is particularly true with the language we use to identify ourselves. We should strive to ensure that our language does not demean, exclude or offend, by respectfully allowing others to self-identify and by mirroring those terms and identities. Key terms are offered in Spanish as well as English.

Agender (Agénero, sin género): A person who is without gender or who has a neutral gender identity.

Ally: A person who does not identify with a group, but still advocates for that group's rights.

Bi-gender (Bigénero): A person who feels they have both strong masculine and feminine identities.

Cisgender (Cisgénero): Someone who is comfortable with the gender they were assigned at birth. The state of not being transgender. "Cis" means "the same as"

Crossdresser: A cisgender person who, on occasion, dresses in clothing deemed inappropriate by society for the gender assigned them at birth. The purpose is usually emotional comfort or erotic fulfillment. They may not necessarily wish to change their sex. Many identify as heterosexual, but may be of any sexual orientation.

Drag King & Drag Queen: A person who crossdresses, often involving the presentation of exaggerated, stereotypical gender characteristics as a means of art, performance, entertainment, or parody. Drag queens are males in drag; drag kings are females in drag.

FTM (female to male), transgender man (Hombre transgénero): A person who was assigned female sex at birth but who identifies as male.

Gender: A set of social, psychological, and emotional traits, often influenced by societal expectations, that classify an individual as feminine, masculine, androgynous, or other.

Gender Binary: the concept that everyone must be one of two genders: man or woman.

Gender Expansive: A person whose gender expression and/or identity broadens or overflows our binary cultural and societal expectations for men and women. Some people prefer this term to "gender non-conforming."

Gender Expression (Expresión de género): The outward manifestation of internal gender identity, shown through clothing, hairstyle, mannerisms, and other characteristics.

Gender Identity (Identidad de género): The inner sense of being a man, a woman, both, or neither. Gender identity sometimes aligns with a person's sex, but sometimes does not.

Gender Dysphoria: an intense, persistent discomfort resulting from awareness that the sex assigned at birth and the resulting gender role expectations are inappropriate. Some consider gender dysphoria to be a symptom of gender identity disorder, a health condition recognized by the American Psychiatric Association. Many transgender people do not experience gender dysphoria.

Genderqueer (Buscador de género): a term used by some people who may or may not identify as transgender, but who identify their gender as somewhere on the continuum beyond the binary male/female gender system.

Heteronormative: A term that describes the marginalization of non- heterosexual relationships and reinforces the binary system of viewing gender.

Heterosexism: The systems of advantages bestowed on people who are heterosexual. It can also be the assumption that all people are, or should be, heterosexual and gender-conforming.

Intersex: A person whose biological anatomy and/or genes vary from the expected male or female anatomy and/or genetics. People with intersex conditions should not be assumed to be transgender.

LGBTQ+: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, plus so much more!

MTF (male to female), transgender woman (Mujer transgénero): terms used to identify a person who was assigned the male sex at birth but who identifies as a woman.

Non-Binary (No binario): A person who does not identify as a man or a woman. They might identify as both, neither, somewhere between, a different gender or no gender at all. They may prefer other terms for themselves, like: genderqueer, gender- expansive, gender fluid, two-spirit, agender, etc.

Post-op, Pre-op, Non-op: terms used to identify a transgender person's surgical status. *Use of these terms is often considered insulting and offensive. Surgical status is almost never relevant information for anyone except a transgender person's medical providers.*

Queer: A simple label to explain orientations, gender identities and/or gender expressions that do not conform to societal expectations. Some people view this as a term of empowerment and others strongly dislike this term.

Questioning (Cuestionando su sexualidad): A person who is unsure about their orientation and/or gender identity.

Same-Gender Loving: A term used most frequently in communities of color that affirms the same-sex attraction of individuals. The term may be preferred over lesbian, gay or bisexual.

Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS): any one of a variety of surgeries involved in the process of transition from one gender to another. Many transgender people will not undergo SRS for health or financial reasons or because it is not medically necessary for them.

Transgender (Transgénero): In its broadest meaning, this umbrella term encompasses anyone whose self-identity, behavior or anatomy falls outside of societal gender norms and expectations.

Transphobia: Negative feelings, attitudes, actions, or behaviors against transgender people or people perceived to be transgender. It may also be a fear of one's own gender non-conformity.

Transsexual: A person whose gender identity is not congruent with their biological sex. These individuals may or may not pursue hormonal or surgical means to bring congruency to themselves. Some people dislike this term and prefer the terms: transgender or trans.

Transitioning: Refers to a variety of activities that some trans people may pursue to affirm their gender identity. This may include changes to their name, sex designation, dress, use of specific pronouns, as well as medically supportive treatments like hormone therapy, sex reassignment surgery, or other procedures. There is no checklist or average time for a transition process, and no universal goal or endpoint. Each person decides what meets their needs.

Two-Spirit (Gente de doble espíritu): A Native American term for LGBTQ+ individuals with dual or multiple genders. It can mean having both a masculine and a feminine spirit. For some two-spirit describes a societal and spiritual role that certain people play within traditional societies (mediator, transcending accepted roles of men and women, keeper of certain ceremonies, fulfilling an established middle gender). It has different meanings in different communities.